

# Free term paper about modern fictional hero story

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Since time immemorial, people have been generating strong figures to look up to. These physically powerful figures are known as heroes. The presentation of these heroes in traditional mythological heroes is very different with that of modern day fictional hero stories. However, these heroes are created in related ways. They have to protect those in danger, despite the challenges they face. In classical mythological hero stories, the heroes are presented as infallible and set apart from the community. The heroes are expected to be in aid of the people in time of distress and fight the enemies on their behalf. The heroes were expected to complete their set missions without error, despite their challenges they face. The heroes had superhuman strength, and were better than ordinary humans were. A perfect example of traditional heroes can be found in classical mythological hero stories, in the Greek mythology.

The Classical Greek mythology contains tales and epics of the ancient Greek and Roman literatures and myths. On the other hand, Homer's two epic poems, the Iliad relate to the events of the Trojan War while the Odyssey details Odysseus expedition after the war. Homer's epic poems, the Odyssey and the Iliad present a major part of ancient history as modern fictional heroic stories. In ancient Greek, heroes were humans who were depicted to possess superhuman abilities. A key example in the classical mythology is Achilles who is later known in Homer's Iliad as Achilles. Achilles is the greatest hero of the Iliad whereas Odysseus is the greatest hero of the Odyssey. The greatest heroes from classic mythology and the modern fictional hero's stories are mortal, and subject to death. The Odyssey and the Iliad mark the beginning of modern fictional literature.

Modern fictional heroes are viewed as superhuman, yet relatable, and able to fit in the society. The heroes are subject to strong moral codes, and their work is to save the endangered no matter the hardships. Homer is credited for writing epics that generate source materials for the modern world heroes. The Iliad and the Odyssey by Homer are captivating stories with fascinating heroic characters. The Homer stories share with classical mythology typical recurrent motifs. The two Homer epic poems focus on the Trojan War, and its result. The epic poems contain the Greek mythology featuring the Greek gods, goddesses, mythological creatures, and the Greek heroes, and heroines. In addition, the principal motifs typical of classical mythological hero stories are; the dominance of fate, evil fighting against the gods, and death. In both the classic mythology, and the modern fiction hero stories, the heroes always have a helper in their expedition, but ultimately, they have to stand alone, face the darkness, and conquer it in order to become victorious.

Homer through his characters in the Odyssey and the Iliad depicts the protagonists as Greek heroes. The protagonists are just normal characters in the society who in the end of the story prevails despite the odds being stacked against them in the situations they face respectively. The heroes in Homer's story exhibit superhuman strength, and endurance characteristics. They tend to fight to the end to save the situation.

Fate has been an issue of great concern for the Greeks. Many characters in the Greek mythologies go to great attempts to fight against their fate, yet they clearly know that the fight is futile (Morford, Lenardon and Sham 640). There is always the issue of fighting immortality among Greek legends. Most

Greek myths and modern fictional hero stories focus on gods, goddesses, demigods, heroes, or mortals with their exploits, yet it is always determined that regardless of their exploits, there is nothing that can alter fate, or prolong the destiny of one's life. The inexplicable twinning between willpower and fate is noticeable in many stories and philosophical treatises of the Greeks and in modern fictional stories.

In the *Odyssey*, it is very clear that Odysseus will have to die, even if it happens in prophecy. On the other hand, in the *Iliad*, Achilles is destined to die despite the fact that he was the hero of the war. Homer writes, "No man or woman born, coward or brave, can shun his destiny" (403). Only the gods are exempted from dying because they are immortal. In fact, immortality is dominant in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The heroes fought with all their strengths and even escaped death in many horrific cases, but ultimately, they die a hero's death. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*'s fictional characters are based on characters from the Greek classic mythology.

Another motif typical of classical mythological hero stories is that blood begets bloodshed. The ancient Greek myths such as the Sophocles' *Oedipus* trilogy, Sophocles' *Oedipus* trilogy, Euripides' plays, Euripides' plays demonstrate the irreparable persistence of blood shed. The same applies for Homer's two great epic poems, *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*. The heroes during their fight, they shed blood and will always fight to save their people from the enemies. If one of their own has been killed through shedding blood, they revenge the other side through blood shed too.

In addition, the hero's quest is another symbol that is recurrent in classical mythological hero stories and modern fictional stories. The stories are similar

because, in most of them, a hero is born as a poor person, or raised by a single mother. Most of the heroes had unfortunate childhood, but they had to fight back in order to get what they want in life. Ultimately, all of them end up as heroes of the people despite their background. A good example from a classical mythology story is the story of Theseus, who was raised far from Athens. He had to save his people from sending their children as human sacrifices to the monster Cretan Minotaur. Theseus managed to slay the monster and found his way out of the labyrinth. Another perfect example is in the story of The Odyssey where Odysseus does not grow up with his parents, goes to fight in the Trojan War and has to undertake an uphill task to come back home to his wife and kids. Odysseus underwent an arduous journey on his way back home after the battle. He had to fight with the gods and other mythological creatures, before reaching his family. Most of the heroes in both modern and mythical stories depart on a quest and have to come back victorious. Odysseus is an example of a modern fictional character that is relevant to present times sharing traits with classical mythological characters. Odysseus is ready to fight despite the challenges, he says, What hardship have I not long since endured at sea, in battle! Let the trial come, (Homer 506). He was determined to reach his family after the war.

In the Iliad the hero's quest is depicted by Achilles despite his background, he fought to his last breath. Achilles fought the Trojan War as a true hero who was unbeatable, until the gods decided that it was time of his death. Achilles was the hero of the Achaean army, and while on the battlefield, the opponents could not defeat them (Homer 248). Achilles possessed

superhuman strength, and had a strong relationship with the gods. In both the Classical mythology, and the modern fictional stories, the protagonists possessed superhuman strength, and were always in close contact with the gods. They all thirsted for glory, and they yearned to become heroes of their people. The heroes in both stories were willing to sacrifice, even their own lives, to make a name and be remembered as unbeatable heroes in their community. In addition, the heroes face a great danger in their expedition, but nothing stops them in their quest for glory. A perfect example is a Greek mythology of Gilgamesh whereby, Gilgamesh decides to face a fire-breathing giant in order to entertain his close ally, Enkidu.

Another recurring motif typical in classical mythological hero stories and modern fictional stories is the theme of the gods and goddesses. In the stories, the gods and goddesses are there to explain what is unknown and to protect the heroes. The heroes in both the modern fictional hero stories and mythological hero stories interacted with the gods. The gods are given human like personalities, and appearances. In Homer's works the Iliad, he clearly states that the gods are very different from humans where it says, "Never think yourself the equal of the gods – since there can be no likeness ever between the make of immortal gods and of men who walk on the ground" (Homer 430). This was addressed to one of the Trojan heroes who thought that he was equal to the gods.

Heroes have been there since time began; however, their presentation is different from traditional, to modern day heroes. The classic mythology and the modern fictional hero's stories feature the same topics and symbols for instance, the dominance of fate, evil fighting against the gods, hero quest,

and death. The heroes in classical mythologies travel in an unfamiliar world, and supernatural forces (Morford, Lenardon and Sham 710). They also fight against all the odds to make a name among their people, receive rewards, and be named as unbeatable heroes in their community. Heroes take their first step in their quest for glory and nothing pulls them down. They wander away from home for a long time, endure the trials and tribulations and finally return home victorious. This can be seen in both classical mythology, and modern fictional hero stories. They encounter unexpected supernatural and unusual events, but they fight until the end. A good example is Theseus fighting with the Minotaur. According to Campbell (101), the heroes receive help from unexpected sources or rather divine sources when they are about to give up. When they return back home, no one recognizes them. For instance, even his own wife, Penelope, could not recognize Odysseus on his return home. The Iliad, and the Odyssey are good examples of modern fictional hero stories that feature the same themes, topics, and exact encounters the heroes in Classical mythologies encountered. They are epic poems that explain the lives of heroes in ancient times, and what they had to go through in order to get victory for their people, and to become unbeatable heroes.

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